

To the Honorable Court

From:

Mason Mairead

Brother-in-Law of George Pickard

I have known George Pickard for almost nine years. I have seen him go through a slew of bad decisions, impressive achievements, traumatic experiences, and dumb luck throughout that time. Despite his conviction for possessing an unregistered firearm, I do not believe he or our broader society would benefit from his incarceration.

I have a great love for the Pickard family. They can be chaotic at times, but I greatly respect the deep bonds of love that are the foundation of their family. Through my relationship with Claire, I have witnessed the challenges George has created and faced. Claire cares about many people, but her compassion for him is incredible to witness as an example of unconditional love. I will admit that, for a few years, George was a difficult person to maintain a relationship with, but I am glad he is in my life.

I have spent time with George at his family's home and during his visits to Claire and me. He has joined me at Quaker meetings, we have gone on hikes together, shared meals, and can look back on many fond times. He has shared with us the intense bullying he faced at Galveston while he struggled to complete his college education at a young age. He can be a great storyteller, sharing wild tales from his travels with an incredible knack for making friends everywhere he goes. George has come to Claire and me for advice in his professional and personal life. His intellect is wonderful to engage with, as is his gaiety. I have never heard him speak of harming others, espousing violent interests, or sharing hateful opinions toward any group. I do not fear him or him having a negative impact on others; the only person he has ever harmed is himself.

George has constantly been searching to find himself and a tribe. He has dedicated an immense amount of energy to this pursuit, and I was deeply upset that the most welcoming community he found was those in far-right circles. It was hard to understand why he was drawn to such negativity. Some mix of internet radicalization and the development of a twisted sense of humor seems to have pointed him in an extreme direction. I am unclear about his mental health issues, but he has been heavily drawn to excitement and controversy. Perhaps the simplest explanation is a deep insecurity that he had not found a healthy balm for. I shared with him that if he went too far down this road, he would jeopardize his relationship with me and his sister. I have tried to encourage him to seek healthier outlets for his need for excitement and to feel special. The troubled young man that brings us to court has faded away. I believe George is on a path that will bring out the best in him and benefit society.

George has overcome significant challenges, many of them his own making. He has grown significantly over the last year and a half. The trauma of the FBI raid led him to begin a process

of reflection and renunciation of what led him to be a person of interest for the FBI. He had already begun the process of de-radicalization and finding a more pro-social future for himself before he was arrested through meditation, treatment, and overturning his negative relationships. He wants to become a healthier person. Talking to him while in jail, I have heard George speak of many ideas to find a better life. I am particularly encouraged by his idea of engaging in challenging international aid work, looking to combine his love of travel and excitement. I hope he can build a better future for himself soon.

I fear for his mental health and well-being if he is to be further incarcerated. I see no benefit in further restricting his freedom and removing him from society for any time. I hope it will please the court that he receives as little time as possible. I pray that justice and care will prevail for him and all those in court at his sentencing.

Respectfully,

Mason Mairead